

WITH TEST-BAN TREATY—HAS KHRUSHCHEV CHANGED HIS WAYS?

Interview With an Authority on Communist Affairs

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Why did Khrushchev suddenly make a nuclear deal with the West? Is he on our side now?

In this exclusive interview, one of America's leading students of Communism takes a close look at Russia's motives behind the test-ban treaty. He also puts the Russia-China dispute in perspective, and tells what it means to the U. S.



Zbigniew Brzezinski is head of the Research Institute on Communist Affairs at Columbia University. His writings and lectures have made him a widely recognized authority on Communism. He has been denounced by Moscow, most recently for an article on Russia which the Reds called "brazenly impudent."

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Q Dr. Brzezinski, with this new nuclear-test-ban treaty, do you think that Khrushchev now will be taking a softer line?

A I am hopeful that the test-ban agreement will somewhat stabilize the situation, and that the Soviets will commit themselves to a more pacific policy. But this doesn't happen overnight.

We ought to realize that the Soviet Union has a certain continuity of purpose, and certain long-range interests, and certain underlying assumptions which don't change from day to day. And they don't change suddenly as a result of the signature of any treaty.

Q Does that mean they never change?

A They change over a longer period of time, to be sure, just as everything changes in the world.

Yet we in this country keep going through these phases in which we talk first about the Soviets being revolutionary, then about "good old conservative Uncle Joe," then Uncle Joe becomes a tremendous menace in retrospect. Khrushchev was a good guy, then he was an adventurer in Cuba, now he's a good guy again.

I must say, to anyone who works professionally in this field, it's pretty discouraging to see these wild swings of public and press opinion in this country.

Q Do you mean that this treaty won't bring with it a basic change in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union?

A I think we ought to understand that the Soviet Union operates in long-range terms, that signing of the treaty involves a reassessment by the Soviets of the present world situation, and that this reassessment will have certain binding consequences for the next three or four years. But it does not represent a fundamental change in our relations.

I feel I ought to make it very clear that the Soviets think of the world as changing in terms of phases. There are revolutionary phases and there are quiescent phases.

Q Are we now in a quiescent phase?

A Yes, that's the Soviet assessment of the world scene, an assessment that imposes on them a certain broad strategy, that of "peaceful coexistence."

Q Why?

A The crucial factor is the relative balance of power. If, in their judgment, that balance of power changes in their fa-

vor, that in itself would put us in a new phase, another revolutionary phase.

Changes come about like this: Khrushchev, I think, overestimated what he thought was a very effective—for him—balance of power last year. Ever since 1957, Khrushchev had felt that Soviet rockets, our overestimation of those rockets—the so-called "missile gap"—plus his effectiveness on the political-diplomatic front, would force us to yield.

In Cuba, he found that he had overextended himself, and he pulled back. Now, after that very painful reassessment, he's adopting this very different posture.

Q Do you think the dispute with the Chinese was an important reason for the Russians' getting into this treaty?

A No. I think that by far the most important reason was the confrontation in Cuba, which forced the Soviets to realize that their military power was inadequate to the tasks which Khrushchev has set before the Soviet Union.

But I should add that I think the Chinese business did play a minor part in Khrushchev's decision. I would argue that the conflict with the Chinese closed off an alternative course of action for Khrushchev. It kept him from choosing the policy of what is called the "national-liberation struggle"—that is, stirring up revolutionary struggles in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The reason he didn't do that is the row with the Chinese. The "national-liberation struggle" is what the Chinese emphasize, and to have adopted it would have been to subordinate himself to the Chinese.

Q Do you mean that it would have meant accepting the Chinese version of the world?

A That's right. And, for that strategy, the Chinese are a better model. In this sense, the Chinese problem enters into the test-ban decision in a secondary way, but not as a factor of prime importance.

Q Are the Chinese really more offensive-minded than the Soviets?

A Both are really offensive and revolutionary-minded. At the present moment, the Soviets, because they've accepted the quiescent phase, are less revolutionary than the Chinese. But, on the other hand, only a year ago in Cuba, the Soviets proved themselves more adventurous than the Chinese. So I think that we should not accept unquestioningly the Soviet labeling of the Chinese as warmongers. I think the Chinese have been very cautious.